

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE QUITO 4621
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TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH FORMER PREISDENT JOSE MARIA VELASCO IBARRA

1. ON JULY 11 AND 12 QUITO'S DAILY EL TIEMPO PUBLISHED AN
IN DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH FORMER PRESIDENT JOSE MARIA VELASCO
IBARRA. TWO EL TIEMPO REPORTERS RECENTLY VISITED VELASCO AT
HIS HOME IN BUENOS AIRES.

2. MOST OF THE INTERVIEW WAS TAKEN UP WITH VELASCO'S REMINIS-
CNCES BUT THERE WERE SEVERAL SUBSTANTIVE POINTS. FIRST,
VELASCO UNDERScoreD HIS OFTEN REPORTED DETERMINATION NOT TO
RETURN TO ECUADOR TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE PRESIDENCY. HE CITED
AGE AND A FLAGGING MEMORY. IF THE PEOPLE DEMANDED, HOWEVER,
HE MIGHT BE AVAILABLE TO BE A SHORT-TERM TRANSITIONAL PRESIDENT.
VELACO ALSO REITERATED HIS OPPOSITION TO THE CURRENT GOE
PROCESS FOR RETURNING ECUADOR TO CIVILIAN RULE, SAYING THAT
THE TRADITIONAL CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WOULD BE BETTER.

3. WHEN ASKED HOW "VELASQUISMO" (HIS POLITICAL PARTY)
WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING REFERENDUM VELASCO REPLIED
THAT HE RANKLY BELIEVED THAT "VELASQUISMO" NO LONGER REALLY
EXISTED AS A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

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4. TURNING TO PERSONALITIES VELASCO HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR
QUITO'S MAYOR SIXTO DURAN AS A PRESIDENTIAL POSSIZILITY.
WHEN ASKED ABOUT POPULIST ASSAD BUCARAM, VELASCO LIMITED
HIMSELF TO SAYING THAT BUCARAM WAS GOOD AT MINIPULATING
MULTITUDES. HE HAD HARSH WORDS FOR LIBERAL PARTY POSSIBILITIES
RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA AND FRANCISO HUERTA MONTALVO, UNCLE AND
NEPHEW, WHOM VELASCO CHARACTERIEZED AS UNTRUSTWORTHY AND AS

"POLITICAL CADAVERS." HE DECLINED TO COMMENT ON THE POTENTIAL CANDIDACY OF HIS NEPHEW, THE HIGHLY RESPECTED POLITICIAN-BANKER JAIME ACOSTA VELASCO.

5. COMMENT: IN SPITE OF HIS PARTY'S DECLARATIONS TO THE CONTRARY, VELASCO'S CONTINUED INSISTENCE THAT HE WILL NOT BE A CANDIDATE IS HAVING ITS EFFECT. FEW KNOWLEDGEABLE POLITICIANS INCLUDE EITHER VELASCO OR HIS POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, VELASQUISMO, IN THEIR CALCULATIONS. NEWSPAPERS JULY 12 REPORTED THAT VELASCO, IN A LETTER, ENDORSED THE ECUADOREAN DEMOCRATIC ACTION POLITICAL ORGANIZATION RECENTLY ANNOUNCED BY HIS NEPHEW JAIME ACOSTA VELASCO. ALTHOUGH ACOSTA'S CANDIDACY IS VIEWED KINDLY BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND OTHER MODERATE RIGHTISTS, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT HIS UNCLE'S ENDORSEMENT WILL BE READILY CONVERTIBLE INTO POLITICAL CAPITAL.
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